

Oral History Cover Sheet

Name: John Tremblay

Date of Interview:

Location of Interview: Randolph Mountain Club, New Hampshire

Interviewer: Steve Chase

Brief Summary of Interview: John Tremblay was born in Manchester, New Hampshire on March 26, 1960 to Marcel and Sylvia Tremblay. His father was a dental technician and his mother was a housewife. As a kid John liked to play baseball, go fishing, did a lot of tree climbing and explored the area where he lived. He talks about coming to Randolph for the first time, to Gray Knob, with a friend and falling in love with the area. He also talks about the various jobs he held for the Randolph Mountain Club including being the caretaker for Gray Knob and working on the trail crew. He shares some wildlife experiences that he had including being followed by a pack of dogs part of the way up to Gray Knob when he was sixteen or seventeen years old, seeing bears and even being followed by an animal that he's not quite sure what it was. He was in charge of rebuilding Gray Knob and Crag Camp and talks about that experience. John also talks about how he feels attitudes of the people coming to the RMC have changed from 30 years ago to today.

Steve: Okay first thing is for you to say your name and spell your last name.

John: My name's John Tremblay. And that's spelled T R E M B L A Y.

Steve: And where's your birthplace and what's your birth date?

John: Manchester, New Hampshire, 4/26/60.

Steve: Let's see, who are your parents?

John: Marcel and Sylvia Tremblay.

Steve: And what did they do?

John: Well, my mother was a housewife and my father was a dental technician.

Steve: When you were a kid, what kind of outdoor activities would you do?

John: Well, played baseball a little bit, went fishing, a lot of tree climbing, kind of exploring in the area, you know, just taking hikes with a map as a guide and just seeing where we'd end up.

Steve: When did you first come to Randolph?

John: In 1975 or '6.

Steve: And what would you do?

John: Well, first trip here was to Gray Knob with another person that ended up being a caretaker, Sean Irlbacher; he'd been here before and he brought me up here and just fell

in love with it from that day and I've more or less been not here ever since but I've been coming back and lived here now since '81 or '82.

Steve: When did you first work for the Randolph Mountain Club?

John: May and June of '81. I was a Gray Knob caretaker.

Steve: And what attracted you to want to work for the RMC?

John: Well, you know that's really hard to say; I mean I wanted, I'd been to Gray Knob and I just, I really loved spending time there and I felt well, why not be a caretaker, this would be a great way to spend as much time as possible. And then after that I worked on a trail crew for a couple seasons and did a couple other, a couple of winters as caretaker as well.

Steve: Well, you're probably the one person that's worked for the RMC that has spent the most time working. So I wonder if you can give me a bit more detail, breakdown of all the different jobs?

John: Sure, May and June of '81 I was caretaker and then most of that summer we were kind of an auxiliary trail crew cuz they'd had a serious amount of blow downs and we did kind of the hard-to-reach areas, kind of the pick-up-sticks type of work where there're, you know, just massive trees and a little above of what their care, trail crew, were capable of at the time.

Steve: You could use the chainsaw.

John: We were using chainsaws, exactly, and I think some of the trail crew couldn't at the time.

Steve: Right.

John: So, so we, we went out with a chainsaw.

Steve: And who's we?

John: I think it was me and Peter Wallace and I think, believe you helped a little bit.

Steve: Yeah.

John: Steve Chase. And after that I went and hiked 700 miles of the Appalachian Trail that fall, you know, came back through the Whites, spent a couple weeks at the Gorham area. And then I believe I was trail crew for the next two summers and I did a winter stint, May and June, I mean '82, '83 and '83, '84 I was a winter caretaker. I think six probably six and five months, you know, and did an awful lot of construction work for the RMC as well. Helped rebuild the Log Cabin or the, the original, not, not quite the Cabin itself, not the new one, but they rebuilt the floor.

Steve: I remember we burned down the Log Cabin.

John: Yeah, yeah. Yeah that was a sad day.

Steve: Yeah.

John: I hate to see those old ones go but you know sometimes it's just time. I think that was my first job that I remember working for them, worked with Sandy Harris on that one, that's where I met him and ended up working with him for several years here in town afterwards. I helped build Gray Knob and, the new Gray Knob and the new Crag Camp.

Steve: Well you're being modest.

John: More or less in charge of those projects.

Steve: Yeah.

John: And spent, I think they were about six months apiece and more or less spent most of the time up there camping or, and/or staying at Crag Camp. Well, we stayed a lot at Crag when we were building Gray Knob and then when we were building Crag Camp we had a little, we built the little shack, we called it the Blue Condo cuz it was basically what just we could salvage, bunks, you know, the old deck and we wrapped it in blue tarps, so we stayed in there and we camped in the area as well. Worked on all three of the major composting toilet systems that they have up there and, you know, numerous other projects. I mean, at one point, I was kind of adding up the days that I had been there or spent, you know, on site and I'm assuming that it's over three years' total time that I've spent actually up there at the camps, you know, between caretaking and building and being sub-caretaker and then just the dozens of trips I went to visit.

Steve: Great. What kind of experiences prepared you for these jobs?

John: Nothing really; I mean, you know, as far as being a caretaker, I mean nothing really except for, you know, my love of the outdoors. I've done quite a bit of snowshoeing in the winter, a bunch of, not even a whole bunch of hiking but I, before I got to be a caretaker I'd been hiking I guess off and on since '75. As far as, you know, working on outhouses and whatever, I kind of just built the skills up as I went along. Most of the time that I wasn't working for the Club, I was involved in, you know, carpentry work so just built the skills as time went on.

Steve: And you were comfortable up in the woods up there and up on the mountains?

John: Oh absolutely yeah, in my element. Not so sure that I want to spend six months in the winter out in the woods now, but...

Steve: Yeah.

John: ...I know I could.

Steve: What was your favorite path going up to Gray Knob?

John: Well, I think the one I used the most was Lowe's Path. So I guess I would have to say that was my, that was probably the one I knew the most and I'd say yeah, overall for the winter, definitely that was my favorite. When we were working up there, of course I lived right across the street from the Amphibrach so we took the Amphibrach Trail, you know, kind of that was the commute for, you know, both of the jobs that we had up there. You know, the big reconstruction projects of the camps so the Amphibrach was definitely the commute.

Steve: I remember in '82 we got paid pretty good. It was before helicopters were being used and the Club would pay us, I think it was \$75 for us to pack a load up...

John: To pack...

Steve: ...construction materials.

John: To pack a load, right, yeah and, no I think what it was, was that we were supposed to get paid...

[Talking at same time John saying "x amount." Steve saying, "You can just probably wait"]

John: ...x amount per bundle of shingles.

Steve: Yeah.

John: And we were hauling two bundles and charging double.

Steve: Yeah.

John: You know, so it's like well, I mean let's just get it done, I mean those are 130 plus pound loads.

Steve: Yep.

John: And I remember someone, I'm not going to mention who, didn't like the fact that we were charging so much for a day's pay. So I said, "All right, well," I think you and I said, "Well, why don't you come with us and take two and see if it's worth it." And as I recall, one of those got left at the Lob Cabin.

Steve: Yeah.

John: It never quite made it.

Steve: Yeah, yeah I think that did happen.

John: (Unclear) Gray Knob so. But I think that's the last we heard about getting paid too much.

Steve: And the double bundle runs never took more than two hours.

John: No.

Steve: So it was pretty good hourly wages.

John: Yeah, we were cranking right along pretty good then.

Steve: Can you describe a typical day at Gray Knob?

John: A typical winter day would be to wake up, you know, eat some breakfast, you know, deal with any concerns that any campers or, you know, overnight guests would have. In the winter, you know, a typical day would be different if there was somebody there or if there wasn't. You know, a typical day would be to wake up, have breakfast, maybe decide what I'm going to do for the day, am I going to do chores, am I going to go for a hike. And then, of course, eat lunch, a lot of eating, a lot of eating and cooking. I really like to cook, you know, so I did a lot of cooking there. And then you would have chores to do, not so many in the winter as you would in the summer but, you know, there'd be some snow shoveling to do, keeping you know things cleared out. You know, maybe do a hike or a climb in the afternoon, come back, you know it's getting dark around four or four-thirty usually so that was about the end of the day. I remember a lot of days like waiting up for radio call for six o'clock so I could go to sleep.

Steve: Wow.

John: Just, just nothing to do after awhile or if I was going to stay up, you know, I'd have a fire going, sit around and read by candlelight, not so much by the lantern. I didn't like the noise so much. I use that more or less when there were people there, you know, and we needed, you know, a nice bright light so everyone could see easily. Most of the time I just went with candlelight.

Steve: You had to collect your own firewood?

John: I did, yes.

Steve: And that was a pretty big project?

John: It was, yeah. The first year, I believe I started in September, I think I started in September and I had plenty of time to do it. I spent, you know, September and most of October collecting the firewood and had a modest supply. I mean I had enough so I

could burn some everyday but, you know, I couldn't really, you know, I couldn't light it and just let it go all the time. The second year that I was there I got a late start cuz we were out west doing some climbing. I believe I started November 1st and it was a constant scramble to get enough firewood in. I got there and there was, you know, as I recall not much if any. And the first two weeks of November, it snowed most of the time and/or rain so I had a real struggle that year. I didn't have a lot of wood that year and I remember leaving Gary Shavuot with only not much. He came up and was not very happy; I think he came up the beginning of April. And I just, I never could get my hands on enough to make it last. I mean, I was still cutting wood in January and February if I, you know, if I saw something I'd make a mental note, "Oooh, I bet I can burn that." And I'd go back and get it, you know, even if it was enough for like, you know, ten or twelve pieces. Make a special trip for it.

Steve: What were the people like that would come up there?

John: The people were great. You know, I had a lot of fun meeting people, they were all, you know, pretty well prepared except for an occasional, you know, occasional rescue or somebody that would get separated from their party and we'd have to go collect them. Overall the people were really very friendly, competent, got along great; I never remember having an incident up there whatsoever; you know, of course, you have your characters that, you know, that show up but overall the people were just really fun to meet.

Steve: One of the years you were up there, we had a great Thanksgiving. Can you describe that just for a minute?

John: Yeah, that was my first winter up there. A bunch of the regulars; back then there was a core group of regulars that were there pretty much every holiday, you know, they were there Thanksgiving and then they were there for New Year's and then Washington's birthday. So there was, I believe, 36 people there that night and who was—there were five or six of us that supplied the meals, you know, the meal; basically you gave up with

a bunch of stuff, Mark Durham; I was there, I don't remember all the other players but you know a lot of the regulars, I'm sure were there. And we had enough food for all 36 people who showed up at the camp and a lot of people were pretty surprised; it's like "No, whatever you got for dinner, you can eat it if you want but you're more than welcome to eat with us." You know, we had the one table was full of hors d'oeuvres, you know, and that was like course number one. And we emptied that table off and then we did the next course of main dishes, which, I know, we cooked the turkey, we had a ham, there was a huge pot of chili, sure we had two or three types of vegetables; I have pictures of it somewhere, I'll have to look and see; you know that was a long time ago.

Steve: Yeah.

John: I mean that's one thing that I would just never forget, just, you know, that massive amount of food off a three-burner stove and a wood stove; it was just great. I do remember, you know, that I didn't have to buy food again until almost Christmas because people left everything that they'd planned to eat that night, so I had just massive quantities of food.

Steve: That's great. Did you have any low points when you were at Gray Knob?

John: I think, probably; nothing really externally, you know, nothing happened in a family or anything like that. I guess and not really so much a low point but there were, there was one stretch where nobody showed up for two whole weeks. And you know by the time somebody showed up, you know, it was like "WOW" there's somebody actually coming down the trail, you know, almost talked their head off. I would say that would be about the lowest point, you know, the first week I enjoyed it and like by the end of the second week, I'm wondering "Is anyone ever coming back?" You know.

[Steve: I gotta change the batteries.]

[Johh: Okay.]

Steve: Why don't we talk about trail crew for a bit?

John: Okay. Sure.

Steve: What, when you started on the trail crew, was it more of a hike all the paths and brush them and clear them or did you have specific projects that you worked on?

John: The first, well, the first year we were, like I mentioned, were specifically, you know, the chainsaws going out and getting the hard-to-get-to stuff but that wasn't a typical, you know, trail crew position, that was kind of auxiliary. The first year I worked with John Michael Field, our primary objective was to cruise all the trails and clear them. We did that, we did not use a chainsaw on that operation as I recall, you know basically a hand sickle, you know, for clearing things that were in your way, you know, the big stuff and then a couple of axes for clearing blow downs. And so the primary objective was to take care of that and then we had a big project that we did, which took more time on this project than to clear all the trails; we rehabbed a big piece of the Amphibrach Trail, where the Forest Service had re-routed around a gullied out spot. And our project was to see if we could rehab it and basically, you know, build it back up. And we did and you know, it's amazing, you know, we really had no formal training whatsoever, you know, and to go back and look at it now and see that twenty-seven or twenty-eight years ago it's still holding.

Steve: Yeah.

John: And it's still functioning the way it was supposed to, you know, more or less there's been some, you know, some repairs and additions to it but I mean that's kind of neat.

Steve: Yeah.

John: You know.

Steve: Yeah, it is.

John: And that was a really, kind of a; and I still enjoy walking that trail and seeing it and, you know, I've brought my daughter up there and I've brought many other people, you know, who are unfamiliar with trail work or what it means and just, and walking through this; it was a couple hundred feet long I'd say, maybe even closer to a hundred yards, the whole stretch that we did. And so it's kind of neat to see that.

Steve: Did you ever have any wildlife experiences?

John: Um.

Steve: When you were walking the paths?

John: Yeah. I remember once going up to, I was out on the Spur Trail heading for the Hincks going up to Gray Knob. And there was, it was early in the winter season, it had just snowed a little bit, there wasn't much snow on the ground yet. And I could see right in front of me crossing the trail going downhill towards the brook, a big set of bear tracks. And I look down, you know, and I'm thinking to myself, "gee, I wonder, I wonder how close or where that bear is." And as I looked down he was maybe fifteen or twenty feet off the trail and this is like, you know, the first time that I'd really seen, you know, a bear in the woods twenty feet away and I was like "Hoo-oo, boy you just stay where you are, I'll do what I'm doing, you do what you're doing" and it was, it was no problem at all. I just kept walking and he kept walking and I think, you know, my heartbeat got back to normal a couple of minutes later. But that was, that was pretty good. One of my very first nights that I came up here was early November; I hitchhiked up, still in high school and I used to hitchhike up on Friday nights to go up to Gray Knob and get there, you know, eleven, midnight sometimes; one night I hitchhiked up, I got off at Lowe's and I started up in the dark, took one of those little disposable flashlights with

me, that's all I had, you know, one of those little clickers and I thought "Oh, I'll get there with it." Some where about a quarter mile or so in, a pack of dogs picked up on me and started following me.

Steve: Yeah, they call them coydogs.

John: Coydogs.

Steve: Yeah.

John: Well, whatever they were, there were at least three probably four and they were kind of semi-circling around me. And keep in mind, I'm like sixteen, seventeen years old, I don't like dogs to began with, you know, I had trauma with them when I was a kid so now I'm like as freaked out as I can possibly be. And so I'm walking through the woods going faster and faster and faster and these things are still with me, you know, and now at this point I've got a flashlight in one hand and a fork in the other hand, it's like all I have, I'm not going down easy, you know. And so they'd come in, they'd circle around me, I turned around and I would just scream as loud as I could at them and they scatter a little bit. And then they, they; I'd start moving, they kind of close in around again and start yipping and yapping. I mean, I was out of my mind afraid, you know, they were behind me, I couldn't turn around. So I must of, I bet you I was going five or six miles an hour at least, you know, and they'd, they'd close in, I'd turn, I'd scream, they close in, I turn, I'd scream, I was just freaking out.

Steve: That was on the flats, right?

John: That was on the flats, right, and I got to the point we'd call the left hand turn, which is a, well, a left hand turn, just before you get up to The Link.

Steve: Yeah.

John: And right around there somewhere, they, they stop following me for some reason; I was very, very happy about that.

Steve: Yeah.

John: So I'm still moving five, six miles an hour, I get past The Log Cabin and right past there, there's this big icy section, it's still early in November so, you know, kind of there's this glacier that forms up there earlier in the season, it gets covered later. So I, I'm just, I'm literally almost still running, you know, and I hit that and I fall. Off goes, away goes my flashlight, right, and it, I, I see it, I don't see it land but I see it go out and it's like uh-oh.

Steve: (makes noise).

John: Now, here I am like laying in the snow or on the, in the bottom of this, you know, I slide down ten or fifteen feet, fell, I have no flashlight and there are dogs behind me in my mind still, you know, fortunately they were gone, but, and I, all I had to look for was, was matches. I had a book or two of matches and in my mind, you know of course this might be poetic license, but in mind I remember finding that flashlight with one of my very last matches.

Steve: Wow.

John: You know, after like ten or fifteen minutes of looking for the thing. And, you know, so yeah I had experience with animals.

Steve: Who's the caretaker?

John: I think Paul Flanagan was the caretaker at the time or no, I, actually, I don't remember. No, don't remember.

Steve: Could've been Mike Johnson?

John: Could've been, it was, it was a winter...

Steve: Yeah.

John: ...it was like November so it could've been Mike Pelchat. It was either Mike or Mike or Paul, I would think, yeah, I don't remember exactly. Seen, of course, Herman the Ermine, was a resident at Gray Knob and he was around quite a bit, you saw him a lot. Seen pine martins; as far as any other incidents—you know run into moose now and then out working on the trails. Peter Rowan and I one night coming, when we were rebuilding the Vyron D. Lowe trail or making the new one, we work it right till dark, you know, and then it's like we've got, you know, twenty minutes to get out of the woods until we can't see so let's go, you know, and you know we can both hike, we were both tall, we can hike real, real fast. And one day, we're just trucking out of the woods and we can hear something in the woods behind us like following us, I was like, "Do you hear that?" It's like "Yeah, yeah." There's something like twenty, thirty feet off in the woods just pacing us, pacing with us and it's like "You heard that." It's like "Yeah, I'm sure." It's like, "Okay, well, let's do 1-2-3 stop and make sure." And we did that, we'd stop and we'd just hear one, one pad or foot come down and the thing would stop and then we'd get going again and this thing would get following us, it's too dark to see into the woods, we didn't have flashlights with us. So no telling really what it was but it was moving fast and quiet like as fast as we were and right in pace.

Steve: Wow.

John: So that was kind of exciting.

Steve: Wouldn't even speculate what that might be.

John: Nooo, I mean we thought for sure it was a cat.

Steve: Yeah.

John: You know that's what I would speculate.

Steve: Yeah.

John: But you know of course there are none around here so how could it be.

Steve: Yeah, right. Why don't we just talk for a minute about construction crew because you were the person, the lead person that built both the new Gray Knob and the new Crag Camp. Do you have any highlights of those two projects you want to mention? I mean you did, when we did the roof job on Gray Knob in 1982, we were very proud that we wouldn't use helicopters to bring up supplies.

John: Right. I mean this was a totally different animal...

Steve: Yeah.

John: ...cuz there was no way, there was no way we were going to get by without helicopters. I think one of the highlights for me or one of the things that I learned on that job that's followed with me was an extreme appreciation for organization of a project. Because everything that had to get there, had to get there, you know, on a schedule; it had to be there when we needed it. It all had to be weighed, you know, so everything that came into the field was weighed into, you know, eight hundred or nine hundred pound packages, you know, roughly. And one of the things that I remember the most about that Gray Knob project was that we never had to switch a bundle of material to get to something we needed next, everything went in, in perfect reverse order of how we needed to use it so everything we needed was always on the top.

Steve: That's great.

John: But, you know, when you think you're looking at, you know, one or two hundred loads, I don't know how many loads there were, you know, but we'd had, you know, wood stacked up on every trail that we could possibly land wood on and we never had to shuffle a bundle to get out our stuff. And every time we worked with a helicopter crew, which is the first time I ever had, everything went smoothly as far as they were concerned, you know, there were no hold ups, you know, we were looking at six or six hundred plus an hour so I was real aware of the cost. You know, plus cuz I was going directly against my budget and I had no idea what it was going to cost, I said "Well okay, let's say it's going to be..." I guessed, you know "...ten thousand dollars in helicopter." And it was, I think, you know, 9600 or something like that. The whole project that I estimated for Gray Knob was 70,000, of course, you know, what I was going to do was 70,000 plus or minus 10% and our end figure was very close to 63,000.

Steve: Wow.

John: So we were, you know, we weren't working, we weren't getting paid very much. You know, the pay scale then was between like eight fifty and fifteen dollars an hour and we weren't charging for hiking time. So, you know, we felt as though we were doing the best we could for the club at the time, you know, giving them a good value and real conscious about what we were charging them. You know, of course, we were always joking around; it was like, "Well, hey, we told them 70-plus, we should be billing them for 77,000 and all take a nice little, you know split that 14 grand..."

Steve: Yeah, right. (chuckling)

John: "...and take a bonus." But there were other projects that, you know, they used, I think, some of the money they had for cuz that didn't include the big retaining wall that was built around there and you know some of the out house work and things like that. And Crag Camp, went pretty similar to that. Our budget again, we were right, right on budget. We had little or no trouble with, with materials or fly ins.

Steve: We actually used the helicopter to help you place large beams and...

John: Yes, we did, yeah, that was exciting. The main beam on Crag were two 4 by 16 inch by 44 foot long (unclear) beams; it had to be bolted together and these were going in, I think, on the high side. We were close to twenty feet off the ground, of course, we were working from the inside out staging. And they laid, I wanted to bolt them together and bring them up together but they were more than the helicopter could handle. I think they were like six or seven hundred pounds apiece, so they could only take one at a time. And we had, well, I should back up a little bit and say the people that helped on the projects, you know, on Gray Knob, it was me and Albie Pokrob, Peter Rowan and Pat Hackett, I mean primarily. You know, that was the core crew and then we had a bunch of help from other people. Crag Camp it was those same four—Peter Wallace, oh no, and Peter Wallace helped on Gray Knob as well. So it was those five and then Roland Tellier helped on Crag Camp as well. On that particular day, Pat and I were going to be the ones who were going to take possession of the beam, you know, up in the rafters; we're the climbers, we're the most comfortable up off the ground. And I kind of lost the flip; I got the high end in the living room where there was no place to stand so I had to build myself some staging and kind of stand there and wait for this thing to come at me. And Pat was in the framework inside the caretaker's room, above the caretaker's room, so when it came into his side, it kind of just bumped along, you know, the framework and went up and when it came; well, what happened, when this beam came in, it came in low. And it hit me right here (maybe pointing where it hit him) you know, and pushed me up against the wall on my staging. I mean, I was fine, I didn't get hurt, but there was a situation where I really had to move that beam, kind of my end of it, and kind of pick it up off of me and get under it so I could turn around and work it up into the pocket. Now I always, I always joke with Pat cuz when that beam came in, he just ducked underneath the framing and it just skidded along above him; I had nowhere to go.

Steve: Wow. Was someone talking to the pilot...

John: Yeah.

Steve: ...on a radio?

John: Yeah, yeah.

Steve: Yeah.

John: Yeah, yeah, Albie was probably leading them in and you know, Albie was just watching up and telling him what to do. It went real smooth actually, I mean, you know, there wasn't even really a mishap. I mean, if I hadn't been up on the staging exposed it would've, you know, I wouldn't even remember it as much as an incident.

Steve: Uh-huh.

John: So that one went in smooth, the second one went in smooth. One of the things that I remember about that project was one day we'd been held up with our flights for two or three weeks and things were backing up and we had one day where they could get us in and we had two helicopters going for at least eight or nine hours, so we were taking a load like every six to eight minutes all day long. I remember having a chance to drink some water and eat an apple that day; that was a long, long hard day for all working.

Steve: And there was a crew down in the valley that was...

John: There was a crew in the valley that was supporting, you know, doing the valley and hooking the loads and making sure they were coming up in order. I was in, you know, I think we pretty much had them all numbered up but you know every now and then they say "Well, we have to bring this one." So it's like, "Okay, so this one has to go there then." You know, if you got out of sequence cuz everything had to go in the right place to not, you know, after we moved around again. You know, of course, things that

came in the nets, you had to empty the net out, get the net ready and you know six minutes you got another load coming in.

Steve: Wow.

John: I remember that as being as being a rather exhausting day.

Steve: Yeah.

John: But you know, overall between the two projects, I mean to me that's like the highlight of my construction career, you know. I mean it was a very extremely meaning full project to me. We did them with a lot of heart and a lot of care and I just remember it as an awesome time.

Steve: So—how did working on all these projects for the RMC kind of shape your life or your lifestyle after you stopped working? Did it make any difference?

John: After I stopped working for the Club, not really. No, I mean, I continued to this day to do construction and you know with the same, you know, quality and you know heart that I put into those projects. I still do a lot of hiking and climbing; I mean, not as much but you know. Didn't really change things a whole lot; my life just kind of, it progressed into different things, but, you know, the same; I still do a lot of the same things.

Steve: Let's see, is there any, anything else you'd like to mention? Just any funny stories or?

John: You know, I mean I could, I could probably; you know, it's funny when you're sitting here thinking, "Oh gee, what happened?" It's like "I don't remember." You know.

Steve: Yeah.

John: And then like last night when we were talking (unclear), it's like one right after another, things came up.

Steve: Yeah.

John: You know, all kinds of different things happened up there. I know not so much a funny story but that's where I started rock climbing with Mike Pelchat. I got a real appreciation for it, you know, met some of the people that to this day are still my best friends. You know life-changing experience really; I mean, I would recommend it to anybody who has the chance, you know.

Steve: Living in Randolph, have you noticed the difference in the people or in the attitudes of people or just the way the people are that hike up in the mountains now?

John: I mean, I don't do a whole lot of hiking and hanging out in these particular hills. I think it's different because it's an entirely different generation that's in the hills now. I mean this was thirty—it's a generation and a half ago.

Steve: Yeah.

John: I mean, we were in our prime time up there, you know, the early eighties that was, you know, late seventies early eighties, thirty years ago.

Steve: Yeah.

John: So yeah, I think there are significant differences in, you know, people and I don't know; yeah, I think significant differences. I remember the crowds as being—more into the experience of the mountains than the experience of the gear if that makes any sense.

Steve: Yeah, that's makes a lot of sense.

John: You know, it's not exactly what I'm trying to get at but you know, I mean we were wearing, you know, scrapes sometimes, you know, I mean the gear didn't really start to develop until, you know, well when I was up at Gray Knob you know late seventies. You know, the gear starting getting better and better and better; I mean, we were wearing wool and leather and cotton long johns at that time; I got pretty bad frost bite on my feet thinking that (unclear) really was good to twenty below.

Steve: Yeah. (laughing)

John: You know. (laughing) And it, yeah, I mean I think people are all still good up there, they're still, you know, fun to meet, it's just a different motivation as far as I see it. It's not as classic in experience.

Steve: Yeah.

John: You know, and I would think that the people from the fifties are probably saying that about the people from the eighties because I mean it gets easier and cushier. You know, so it's less of a struggle to be out there I think, you know.

Steve: Yeah, well I'll just make an editorial note; I remember one time, just so you could rebel against the way the gear had been involving, you were a great ice climber in the seventies and you went out to a thrift store and you got a golf windbreaker. And you went out to, I think, you went out to Cathedral Wedge where all these people are in their wonderful Gore-Tex outfits and you put on your golf windbreaker with the two cotton cords down the, on either side of the zipper.

John: I wore that thing all season.

Steve: And I always remember that, yeah, just to piss them off.

John: That was great.

Steve: (Laughing).

John: Just to keep things in perspective.

Steve: Yeah.

John: I mean you don't really need the fancy stuff.

Steve: Right.

John: You know you just need to be out there.

Steve: Yeah, out there with the right judgment.

John: That's it.

Steve: Good. Well thank you.

John: You're very welcome.